restrictive economic measures against India. These relate to programmes of three US institutions namely the EXIM Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Trade Development Authority (TDA) in addition to lifting restrictions on Commercial US Banks and International Military Education and Training Programme (IMET).

The US Government stated that it was taking the step in recognition of the progress in the dialogue.

Recently, the US has also announced that it would allow the approval of a World Bank loan for infrastructure and power development in the state of Andhra Pradesh which was coming up for consideration in the Board of the World Bank.

The removal of these restrictions will improve the climate for mutually beneficial business interactions and improve the prospects of Indian and US companies making use of these programmes to raise financing for industrial and infrastructural projects.

ISI's Terrorists Training Camps in Bangladesh

365. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the Hindustan Times on the 20th January, 1999 wherein it has been reported that Pakistan's agency ISI has set up many transit-cum-training camps of mercenaries and terrorists in Bangladesh for sending them to India for creating trouble for India, particularly Kashmir and North Eastern States;

(b) if so, the detailed information with Government of India in this regard;

(c) whether Government have taken up this issue with Government of Bangladesh; and

(d) if so, the result in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (d) Reports indicate that agencies inimical to India's interests, including the ISI, are misusing the territory of Bangladesh for their anti-India activities. Government have been apprising the Government of Bangladesh regularly about this.

This subject is also part of the agenda at meetings of the Border Security Force, Joint Working Group on Border Management & Security and at Home Secretary level talks that India has with Bangladesh. During the Home Secretary level talks with Bangladesh in Dhaka on 20-22 November 1998, both sides reaffirmed their resolve to not allow undesirable elements to use their territories for action prejudicial to the security interests of the other. Both sides agreed to share relevant intelligence towards this end.

Sino-Indian Relations

366. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to normalise Sino-Indian relations;

(b) if so, the efforts made in that regard;

(c) whether any date has been fixed for holding diplomatic talk between both the countries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (d) We seek friendly, co-operative, good neighbourly and mutually beneficial relations with Chir on the basis of

Panchsheel. Both sides are making efforts for further improving the bilateral relations including measures to expand bilateral trade and enhance bilateral exchanges in various fields. The two sides are in regular contact through diplomatic and non-official channels and at various other levels. Visits of Parliamentarians, people-to-people exchanges, visits of political party delegations and functional exchanges in diverse fields are also taking place. Bilateral trade is growing, and reached US$ 1.92 billion in 1998, representing an increase of 5% over 1997. There remains considerable potential to expand our economic and commercial co-operation.

The Joint Working Group on the Boundary Question, set up in 1988 during the visit of PM Rajiv Gandhi to China, and the Protocol on Foreign Office Consultation, signe during the 10th Meeting of the Joint Working Group held in New Delhi in August 1997, provide a framework for bilateral dialogue. The two sides are scheduled to hold Foreign Office Consultations on 25-26 February 1999 in Beijing. No dates have yet been finalised for the 11th meeting of the Joint Working Group.

Strengthening of Indo-Pak Relations

367. SHRI AKHILESH DAS:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what confidence building measures have been taken between India and Pakistan since the resumption of Secretary level talks between the two countries indicating also the steps for fostering closer people to people relations; and

(b) what further steps are contemplated in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) In the lahore Declaration of 21 February 1999, India and Pakistan have agreed to take immediate steps for reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons, and to take measures for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional field aimed at the prevention of a conflict. The two countries further decided to work towards agreements for advance notification regarding ballistic missile flight tests, and on prevention of incidents at sea in order to ensure safety of navigation by naval vessels and aircraft of the two countries. The two countries also decided to upgrade and make secure and failsafe communication links for example, between the respective Directors General, Military Operations of the two sides, to review implementation of the existing CBMs and to set up a consultative mechanism to monitor and ensure the effective implementation of these CBMs.

During their meeting in Lahore on 20-21 February 1999, the two Prime Ministers decided that consultations will be held between concerned officials to further liberalise the travel and visa regimes between the two countries.

Membership of the UN-Security Council

368. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI AKHILESH DAS:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Russian Prime Minister during his recent New Delhi visit indicated their support for india's claim to Permanent membership of the U.N. Security Council; if so, in what terms; and

(b) what is the latest position about support to India's claim from various developed and developing countries?